



# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2005

No. 62

## *House of Representatives*

### STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2005

#### EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PEARL HARBOR MEMORIAL FUND AND THE ARIZONA MEMORIAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the continued efforts of my colleagues, our federal administration, and all Americans toward long-overdue and essential reconstruction of the USS Arizona Memorial Visitors Center at Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i.

Nobody can dispute that one of the seminal moments in American history occurred on December 7, 1941, when the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked our country's Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. It was a dark and tragic day for all Americans. Yet, in the unity, determination and fortitude of our response, we saw the rekindling of a devout patriotism, and we came together to overcome one of our greatest challenges with simple integrity and willing sacrifice.

The events at Pearl Harbor on that day and in early WWII in the Pacific have been viewed through many lenses. "Remember Pearl Harbor" has become a rallying cry each time our nation ventures forth in furtherance of liberty throughout the world. We have remembered of that day and subsequent events that our brave service men and women and our civilian population proudly accepted whatever burden was asked of them to ensure that our way of life would survive, endure, and finally succeed. We have recalled our demonstration that no other nation, no matter how menacing, could withstand our determination to fight for human betterment and humane values. We have reaffirmed our demon-

stration of the power of a nation governed by the will of its people, based on the rule of law, and extolling the value of equality and endowed rights.

Yet what a high price was paid for all this, for the results of December 7th were nothing short of carnage. Six military sites on Oahu were attacked, killing over 2,400 Americans. Over 320 aircraft were destroyed or damaged; over 21 vessels were sunk or damaged. Leaking fuel ablaze hampered rescue operations and threatened undamaged ships. Extraordinary and heroic efforts enabled many to survive the onslaught, but of those fortunate to survive many bore their scars for life.

The Pearl Harbor attack acted as a catalyst in bringing us fully and actively into World War II and served as a rallying cry to unify our country. And because the USS Arizona accounted for almost half of those casualties, it has become the central symbol of our commemoration. In the words of one writer, "because of her significance ..... the Arizona is much more than a sunken ship; she is a national icon."

In the 1950s, the Territory of Hawai'i (which in 1959 proudly became the 50th state of our union) along with our federal government and others spearheaded an effort to create a monument to the USS Arizona and to the many events and

individuals related to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The result, through the combined efforts of public funds and private enterprise, was the building of the USS Arizona Memorial in the early 1960s. This graceful and moving tribute, seemingly afloat over the Arizona and the remains contained within of most of her crew, has come to memorialize perfectly the lessons of Pearl Harbor.

The Memorial has therefore been indispensable to our nation's ability to learn and benefit from the events of December 7, 1941. The memorial itself enhanced and extended the impact of the Pearl Harbor attack into the collective American consciousness. As one newspaper reported, "..... its tenth anniversary in 1951 barely rated a mention in the newspaper of the day. But in 1961 came the dedication of the USS Arizona Memorial ..... and the observances of the U.S. entry into WWII became significant."

In the 1960s and 1970s, the appeal of visits to the USS Arizona Memorial continued to increase. More and more visitors arrived on the shores of Pearl Harbor to ferry the short distance to the Memorial. The numbers rose rapidly and it was soon apparent that a shoreside facility and an organizational responsibility were needed for the safety, security, guidance, and accommodation of the thousands of people lining up to view and pay homage to the Memorial and what it stood for. Branch 46 of the Fleet Reserve Association in Honolulu, a group that had been active in establishing the Memorial itself, once again moved to the forefront of making the visitor experience what it should be by making capital improvements on the shore side as well as at the Memorial. Plans were designed for the construction of the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center at Pearl Harbor.

An Arizona Memorial Foundation was founded to raise consciousness and funds for the new facilities. It became the Arizona Memorial Museum Association, a non-profit entity, in 1979. Once again, the State of Hawai'i, federal government, U.S. Navy, Fleet Reserve Association and Arizona Memorial Museum Association provided the funds necessary to complete the build-

ing. I want to make special mention of my esteemed colleague, the senior U.S. Senator from Hawai'i, DANIEL K. INOUE, who was instrumental in getting this project of the ground.

By any measure, the Visitor Center at the USS Arizona Memorial, today administered by the National Park Service, has been a remarkable success. Over 1.5 million people visit the Memorial annually, twice that projected by the original designers and builders.

So significant is the desire to visit the USS Arizona Memorial and visitors center that visitors often begin to line up as early as 5:00 AM. In some cases, visitors must wait 2-3 hours just to board the U.S. Navy launch that takes them to the Memorial.

The Arizona Memorial Museum Association and the National Park Service have worked together to provide special and general educational and interpretive programs for everyone. Such programs include Witness to History, which matches events and firsthand observers of the events such as Pearl Harbor survivors with students, historians, and schoolchildren in interactive learning sessions on site and through video-conferencing. Pearl Harbor survivors, National Park Service personnel, and others are available to travel to schools and community associations to participate in interactive educational sessions.

To provide additional space for programs and people, the Arizona Memorial Museum Association and the National Park Service started, in 2001, to plan an extension to the present building. Structural engineers and designers were consulted as to what building options were available. Much to the disappointment of the planners, the engineers advised that the current building was settling at a high rate and that its useful life was only an additional 5-9 years.

This knowledge, while initially disappointing, led to the inevitable conclusion that a new structure must be built. This new facility would better accommodate the thousands of visitors and provide for the proper display of many more artifacts and items currently being sent to storage, as

well as meet a National Park Service engineering specification requirement that associated structures have a projected life of at least 50 years.

A detailed plan has therefore been completed for the replacement of the Museum and Visitor Center through the joint efforts of the U.S. Navy and the National Park Service. The primary components of the planned Museum and Visitor Center plan are:

An enlarged and enclosed state-of-the-art museum; An outdoor amphitheater; Updated Memorial orientation theaters; An education center with a library and a videoconferencing facility; Expanded and improved visitor comfort areas including suitable rest rooms; a larger bookstore.

For its part, the Arizona Memorial Museum Association has stepped forward still again to undertake a national public/private program to raise the funds necessary to pay for the construction, endowment, and interpretive requirements of the replacement facility.

Mr. Speaker, the USS Arizona Memorial is a place of the spirit. It exudes solemnity and dignity. People assume prayerful postures and hushed tones as they embark on its landing dock.

The depth of their experience is heightened by the interpretive and educational shoreside activities at the Museum and Visitor Center. It is there that the facts and artifacts, the audiovisual aids and the human interaction, the films and the charts, prepare them with knowledge and perspective for the moments that they will spend searching among the heroes' names, the ship's image, the oily surface, and the haunting environs of the Memorial. The Museum and Visitor Center have themselves become intertwined in the full meaning of a visit to the USS Arizona Memorial. Neither stands alone; together, they are a mighty symbol of the strength, unity, and hope of our nation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers to support the construction of this new visitors center. And, in doing so, I hope and pray that

the USS Arizona Memorial, a national icon, becomes even more imbedded in our national consciousness as a source of inspiration, understanding, and honor for current and future generations.

Mahalo (thank you), and aloha.